



AI Shorta's Greatest Players - Number 4:

Hashim Ridha



Hashim Ridha is the definition of a legend. Many AI Shorta fans believe that Hashim Ridha is AI Shorta's greatest ever striker, and not many can argue with them.

Hashim's senior career started with his hometown club Karbalaa in 1996, where he won the top scorer award of the Iraqi Division 1 (one tier below the Iraqi Premier League) with 24 goals. The star joined AI Shorta in 1998 after they won the Iraqi Premier League. In his first season at the club, at just 20 years of age, he won the Iraqi Premier League's Golden Boot with 19 goals (joint with Ahmed Khudhair of Al Quwa Al Jawiya) and also won the awards for best striker and best young player of the season. That season, he scored a further 14 goals in the Iraqi FA Cup, which is the record number of goals that a player has scored in a single Iraqi FA Cup tournament.

After loan spells at Al Zawraa and Al Talaba, Hashim won the Golden Boot with AI Shorta yet again, this time in the 2001-02 season with an outstanding total of 32 goals. He scored one goal in AI Shorta's successful 2000 Iraqi Elite Cup campaign and scored another in the next edition of the competition which AI Shorta also won; the next edition of the same tournament saw Hashim score one more goal and AI Shorta sensationally win the competition for the third consecutive time.

After a year-long spell at Qatari club Al Shamal between 2002 and 2003, Hashim returned to AI Shorta and played an important role in AI Shorta's Algomhuria International Cup journey in 2004 where they finished fourth.

Two of Hashim's most important goals for AI Shorta came in September 2004. AI Shorta were playing Al Quwa Al Jawiya in a two-legged tie with the winners on aggregate qualifying to the 2005 AFC Champions League. The first leg (on 20th September) saw AI Shorta defeat Jawiya 3-2 with Hashim Ridha scoring AI Shorta's third goal, before the second leg four days later ended in a 1-1 draw with none other than Hashim Ridha scoring AI Shorta's goal; this meant that AI Shorta had defeated Al Quwa Al Jawiya 4-3 on aggregate and had qualified for the AFC Champions League for the second year running, where they were knocked out at the group stage again.

After 2006, Hashim left to re-join Karbalaa, and he spent the rest of his career switching between Karbalaa and AI Shorta. He scored three goals for AI Shorta between 2007 and 2009 before signing for Karbalaa again; he headed back to AI Shorta for the 2010-11 season and was named captain, scoring one goal before spending two more years at Karbalaa and then retiring in 2013 at the age of 34. On 21 August 2013, AI Shorta's league match with Al Zawraa was dedicated to Hashim Ridha with a retirement ceremony being held before the game for Hashim; the ceremony included a mini-testimonial match where Hashim scored a goal for AI Shorta. Overall, Hashim scored 101 goals in the Iraqi Premier League for AI Shorta, and many more in other competitions.

Hashim Ridha, capped two times by Iraq, will always be remembered as one of AI Shorta's best ever players. 'The Rocket' (as he is affectionately nicknamed by AI Shorta's supporters) also worked as an administrative director at the club during the 2013-14 season, helping AI Shorta to win their tenth league title that season, and became the director of football at the club during the 2014-15 campaign. He then became the club's manager for a short spell at the end of the 2015-16 season after the resignation of Radhi Shenaishil.

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